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ACLU OF RI POSITION: OPPOSE

**TESTIMONY ON 25-H 5364,
RELATING TO SELF-SERVICE STORAGE FACILITIES
March 4, 2025**

The ACLU has deep concerns about the extent to which this bill would authorize the selling of property within a self-service storage facility without sufficient notification to the owner of the property. Those concerns are exacerbated by the fact that less than two years ago, the General Assembly weakened the notification requirements that this bill seeks to reduce even further.

Notification requirements to delinquent storage facility occupants first began getting watered down a little over a decade ago when the General Assembly authorized those notifications to renters by email or regular mail instead of, as was previously required, by certified mail. At the time, the ACLU raised objections to the change, concerned that it unduly hampered the rights of individuals to be properly notified of their default and to respond accordingly. We noted that some renters might not receive their notices via mail in time to meet the obligations required by the law, or they might never receive messages sent via email because they went to spam, resulting in the loss of their belongings.

Despite those concerns, in 2023 the General Assembly reduced the notification obligations to renters more – first, by reducing (from three to one) the number of times a newspaper notice of the imminent sale of their property had to be published when personal notice could not be served, and second, by reducing from 30 to 20 days the time by which a claim of owed money had to be paid. Yet this legislation, if enacted, would cut back on notification requirements even more.

At a time of rising poverty and extensive homelessness, people often forced to leave their belongings in a self-storage facility deserve more consideration, not less. It is important that people using storage facilities not unfairly lose the ability to retain their possessions. We therefore urge the committee to reject these amendments to the current notification provisions. Instead, the committee should examine if the current system provides sufficient process for individuals who may often be fighting homelessness, to help them avoid losing precious belongings without adequate notice. Thank you for considering our views.